October 16, 1992

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.
666 Broadway, 12th Floor
New York, New York 10012

Re: Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley v. City Assessor of Rochester, New York

Dear Folks:

Enclosed are the motion papers (but not the exhibits: too thick!) and brief that were recently filed in an action in Rochester, New York challenging the City Assessor's refusal to give the Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley a property tax exemption for its Community Center. I have sent them to you for two purposes.

First, you might find them interesting enough to add to your files of lesbian and gay related litigation efforts. Second, and I'm sure you were expecting this, I hope the papers pique your interest enough that you would be willing to offer your help.

As a legal services attorney, I have several years litigation experience. However, I am handling this case on an entirely pro bono/outside the office basis, and (predictably) it has already consumed far more time than I realistically have. I am handling the case by myself, and could really use some help. (The other lawyer's name is listed for "political" reasons; she has not helped at all on the case.)

The GAGV and I would be extremely grateful for whatever assistance, a little or a lot, you can offer us. At a minimum, I would appreciate it if you could review our papers within the next couple of weeks and give me some feedback, perhaps suggestions for a reply brief, and any strategy suggestions you have. At the other extreme, if Lambda would like to co-counsel, we could certainly use the help and your prestige.

We have been told that we could not have drawn a worse judge than Judge Siracuse for an issue like this. For this reason, it would be helpful to learn from Lambda's experience with handling gay and lesbian related cases before homophobic judges. Although I think the case is strong enough to win on appeal, we are trying to renew our political efforts to change the city's mind. Unfortunately, they have so far been unsuccessful.

I will be out of town until Monday, October 26, 1992. You can write to me before then at the above address, you can leave a message on my home phone, (716) 256-0508, or you can call on the 26th at my day phone, (716) 454-6500.

Thanks in advance for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,

Ellen Yacknin

Ellen Yacknin
Plaintiff's Attorney